own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve themselves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or